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ABSTRACT

The authors were asked to provide in-service training for teachers in an elementary school on an experimental basis. This was the first time the district has offered such training in a single school for faculty of that school. Twenty-two of the twenty-seven teachers at the 800 pupil elementary school in Spring Valley, New York were enrolled in an in-service training course entitled "Behavior Modification Procedures for the Elementary School Teacher." Among the pinpointed behaviors chosen by the teachers to work on were: hitting; out of seat; following instructions; starting and completing class assignments; completing homework; talking spontaneously; accuracy in arithmetic; thumbsucking; group talkout; spelling accuracy; reading speed and comprehension; and wearing glasses. By the third training session most teachers had successfully changed a behavior in the desired direction. Following nine hours of training in behavioral psychology the entire faculty of the elementary school were applying operant techniques with no further apparent need of consultation with the instructors. (Author)

ED 064635

"ACCENTUATE THE POSITIVE"

The Results of an In-Service Training Program for Teachers in the Principles and Techniques of BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION IN THE CLASSROOM

Lime Kiln Elementary School, Spring Valley, N.Y.

Ramapo Central School District #2

September 22-November 17, 1971

by

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INTRODUCTION

On September 22, 1971 the authors began an in-service training program for the teachers of Lime Kiln Elementary School, Spring Valley, New York. The school is one of a number of elementary schools in Ramapo Central School District #2, Rockland County, New York. There are approximately 800 pupils in the school.

Approximately 3 months earlier, the authors were contacted by the school principal, Mr. Gerald Buckalter, and invited to offer a course for the teachers at his school in the basic principles of behavior modification in the schools. The course was entitled "Behavior Modification Procedures for the Elementary School Teacher: Coping with Academic and Behavioral Problems." There were 8 scheduled meetings of 2 hour duration each.

Behavioral Objectives

The purpose of the in-service course was to aid teachers to become familiar with the basic principles of operant conditioning, and their application as behavior modification procedures in the classroom. Each teacher selected one or more "worst problem" children from their own classes. Teachers were trained in the techniques of objective observation and systematic procedures for changing problem behaviors. Weekly sessions provided opportunity for presentation of results of techniques applied by other teachers in the area, as well as those at Lime Kiln.

The prime goal of the workshop was to have the teachers successfully change "problem" children's behaviors in directions desired by themselves. Teachers were aided in identifying the behavioral patterns which disturbed desired classroom procedure and/or prevented youngsters from successfully reaching their own potential. Each teacher charted the results of her work, made transparencies of the chart, and discussed hhe chart with all of the members of the class during each successive workshop meeting.

Results

Every teacher attending the workshop successfully changed the behavior of one or more children, and this success occurred, for many, almost immediately (as the charts on the following pages will demonstrate).

Several factors were clearly responsible for the overwhelming success of the workshop:

1. The use of several hundred color slides which showed the teacher's how-to-do-it (several procedures shown on the slides, many in fact, were applied the next day after they had been seen).

2. The weekly presentation of charts to the group, which allowed communication of the results to all, and showed the teachers their success, and demonstrated, for all to see, their varied procedures for dealing with a wide varity of behaviors (many innovative and important procedures were developed by the teachers themselves).

3. Having the workshop at the teacher's school, and having most of the teachers attend it was of paramount importance. The teachers spoke with one another during the week of their work, collaborated with one another, shared procedures, had parents cooperate, etc. This greatly facilitated an esprit de corps among the teachers.

Summary of Individual Teacher's

Behavior Modification Projects

NAME	Grade	Pinpointed Behavior	Prescription	Results on Page (if included)
1. Shiela Abrams	6th	Whining, shrieking talking like a baby	Verbal praise	5
2. Virginia Andrews	spec. ed.	Accuracy of multiplication	Successive approximation	6
3. Judy Barash	1st	Out of seat Talk-out	Praise-ignore Praise	7 -
4. Nina Bennet	5th	Pouting, Sulking Out of seat	Praise Praise	8 -
5. Judith Conrad	1st	Group Talk-out	Response cost	9
6. Ronnie Fassberg	6th	Completed Assignments Disturbing others	Counting Praise	10 -
7. Joyce Johnston	1st	Group Talk-out	Response cost	11
8. Sandy Kasket	Rem. Reading	Group talk-out, out of seat, study	Token Economy	-
9. Lorraine Levy	K	Not available at time of printing		-
10. Lynda Levy	2nd	Hitting	Praise	12
11. Mary Mahlstedt	K	Talk-out	Praise	13
12. Kathy Nulty	4th	Completed Work	Praise	-
13. Fran O'Connell	6th	Completed Work Class Disruptions	Praise Response Cost	14 -
14. Tess Reveman	4th	Out of seat	Countoon (Response cost)	15
15. Yolanda Rupel	5th	Spontaneous Talking	Prompting	16
16. Shirley Schrier	3rd	Class talk-out Hitting	Praise Praise	- -
17. Irene Shumofsky	3rd	Talk-out	Praise-ignore	17
18. Florence Silver	5th	Speaking Out Completed Work	Praise Counting	- -

Project Summary (Continued

	NAME	Grade	Pinpointed Behavior	Prescription	Page
19	Patricia Zeolla	3rd	Completed Work	Praise-Ignore	18
20.	Marylyn Kleinberg (South Madison School)	1st	Mimicking Hitting	Tokens	-
21.	Marylyn Colton	Student Teacher	Audit		

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Project: Decreasing whining, loud shrieking,skirt tugging, arm pulling, and baby talk verbal behavior with the use of a "praise and ignore" prescription

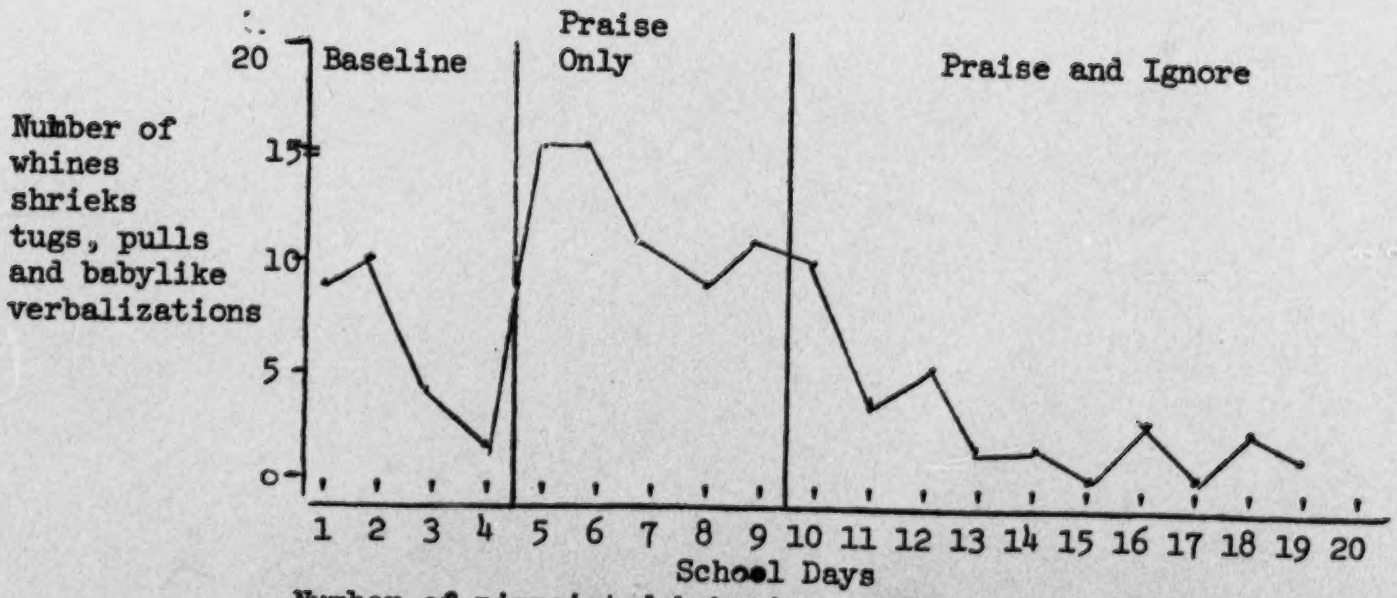
Mrs. Shiela Abrams - 6th Grade Teacher

Pinpointed Behavior: Whining, loud shrieking, skirt tugging, arm pulling, talking like a baby.

Procedure:

The sixth grade boy concerned in this project was generally described as "acting like a baby". He emitted the pinpointed behaviors mostly to the teacher but also to a lesser extent to his classmates. The pinpointed behaviors were counted for 4 days to obtain a baseline. After this period the child was absent for one week. Upon his return the teacher immediately began praising all his "good" behavior. This seemed, however, to increase his inappropriate behavior and demands for attention. The chart below clearly shows this. At this point the teacher began ignoring all the pinpointed behaviors ("pesty actions") and continued to praise desireable behavior.

Results and Discussion:
The marked decrease in inappropriate behavior after the praise and ignore prescription was applied is shown in the chart below. On day 15 the student received the good conduct award for the day.



Number of pinpointed behaviors emitted during 1 hour morning and 1 hour afternoon observation session each day.

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Project: Increasing accuracy of multiplication behavior with the use of praise, immediate feedback and a successive approximation prescription.

Mrs. Virginia Andrews - Special Education Teacher

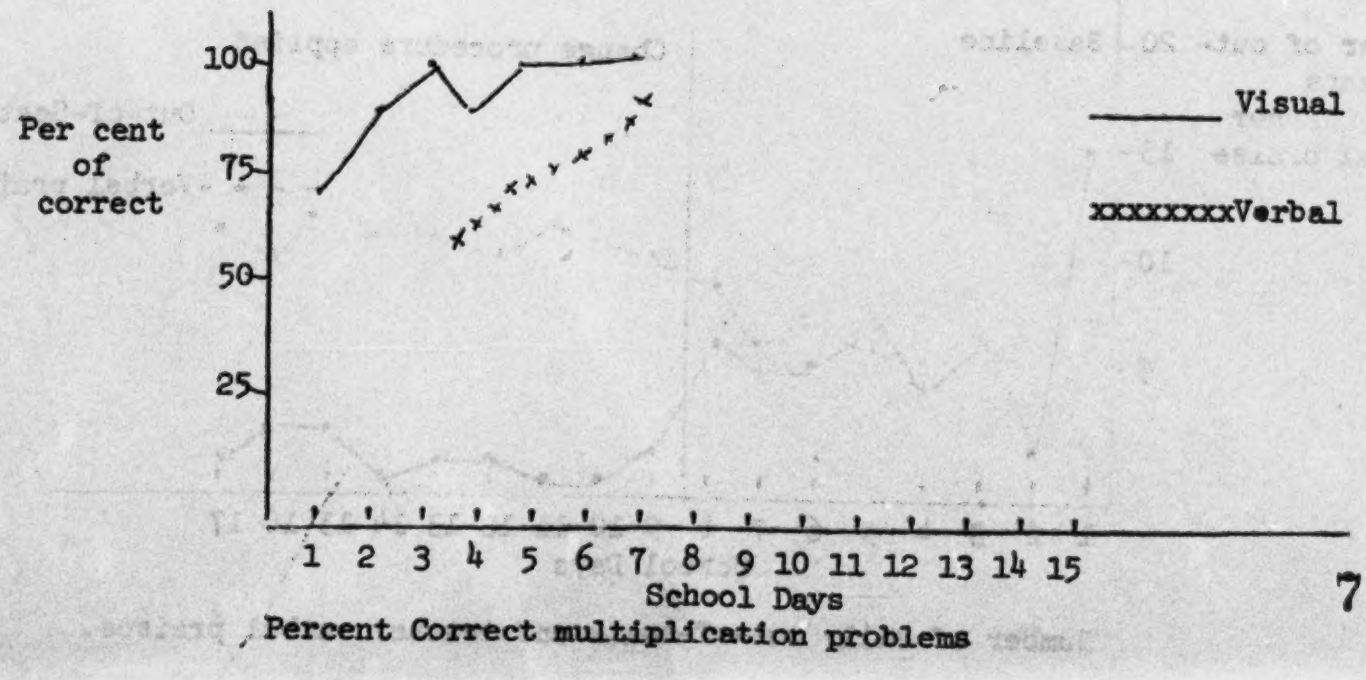
Pinpointed Behavior: Doing multiplication problems correctly.

Procedure:

The child in question was receiving special help in multiplication. A chart of his accuracy was kept. The chart was shown to the child each day so that he could assess his own progress. Each multiplication problem could be presented visually with flash cards or verbally by the teacher simply saying the problem. The speed with which flash cards and verbal problems were given was varied by changing the time between each problem. The use of the chart allowed the teacher to assess immediately how well the child was doing with each type of presentation. When it was found that the child was doing well with visually presented material but not as well with verbally presented material a "shaping" process was begun. Verbal problems were first given at a very slow rate and then slowly increased. Then visual and verbal presentations were mixed to bring the child up to equal proficiency with each type of presentation.

Results and Discussion:

The chart below shows the increase in accuracy with each type of presentation. Simply using a chart allowed the teacher to gage her own prescription. The teacher reported: "_____ was motivated by chart work." The teacher was able to pinpoint his precise problem. He seemed to do well with visually presented material but not with verbally presented material, she was now able to tell classroom teachers just how to work with this problem.



Percent Correct multiplication problems

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Project: Decreasing Out-of-Seat Behavior with the use of a Verbal Praise and Ignore Prescription

Mrs. Judy Bargash -1st Grade Teacher

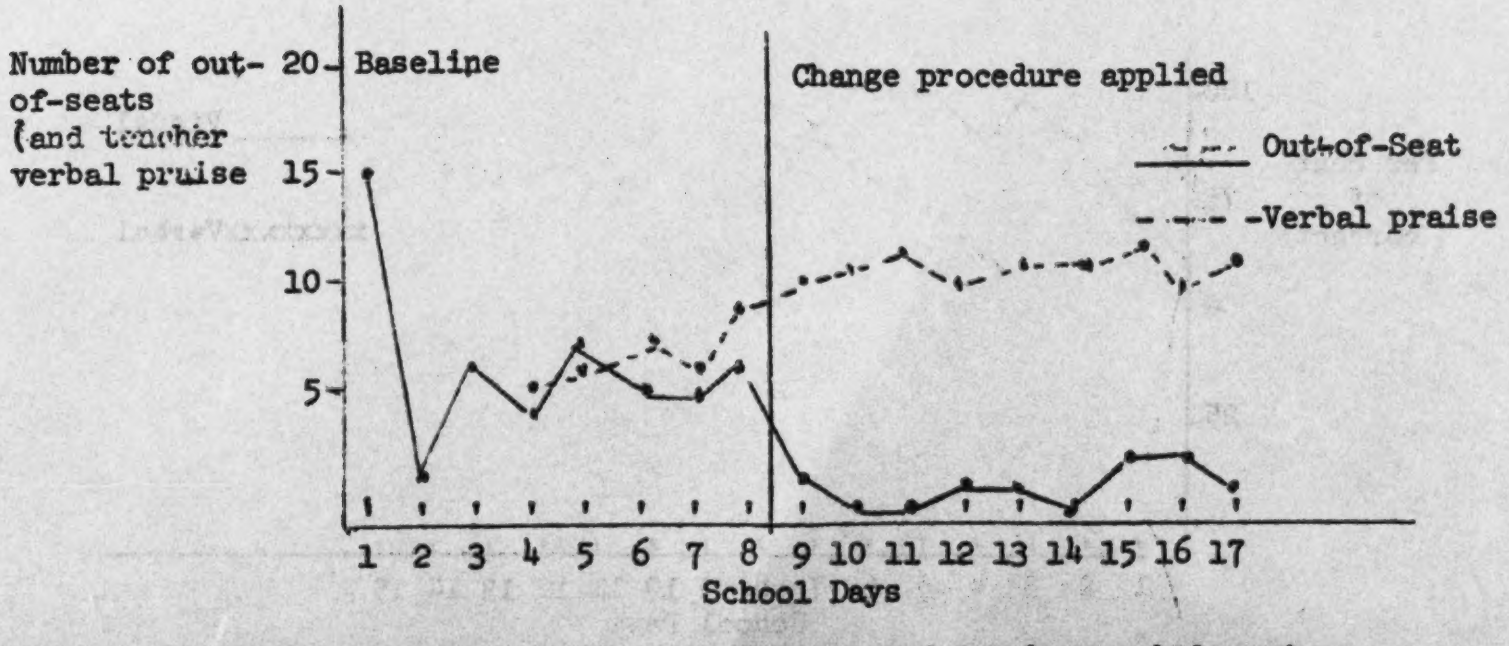
Pinpointed Behavior: Out-of-seat during class

Procedure:

Out-of-seat behavior was recorded for 8 days of baseline during a 30 minute time period. Verbal praise directed towards any member of the class was also recorded during a different time period, and for 20 minutes a day. During the change procedure, out-of-seat behavior was ignored (not talking to the child when he got out of his seat), and he was praised for being in his seat and working.

Results and Discussion:

During the basline the child was out-of-seat around 6 times per 30 minute observation period. Once the teacher increased verbal praise to all of the children, with special emphasis on the target child, the out of seat behavior dropped to around 2 per 30 minute period. It remained at around that level during the change procedure. In addition to the out-of-seat behavior being of concern to the teacher, completing assignments was also of concern. Beigg out-of-seat does not allow a child to do his work, and getting a child to be in his seat is but the first step in getting him to begin his work, and finish it. The teacher reported that, "After I praised him for sitting and doing his work, he completed his assignments. On 10/19/71 his parents were in for open house and they wanted to know what I did to send home completed papers. Prior to his change in behavior, his papers always went home with 'Finish.' " So you can see that changing one behavior had a very important effect on changing another, and more important behavior, that of completing academic assignments.



Number of daily out-of-seats and teacher verbal praises.

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Project: Decreasing pcuting, sulking, and failure to follow instruction behavior with the use of a reinforcement of incompatible behavior prescription

Mrs. Nina Bennet - 5th Grade Teacher

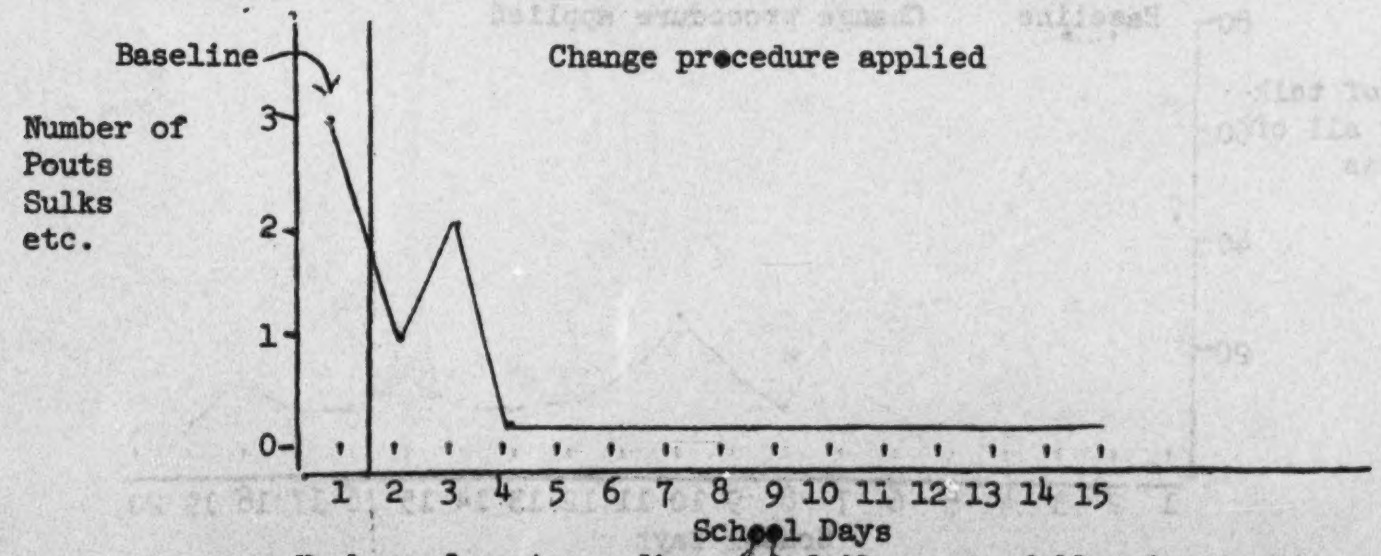
Pinpointed Behavior: Pouting (pursing of lips, emitting whining sound)
Sulking (lowering head, whining, not attending to work)
Failure to follow instructions (not starting work when told to)

Procedure:

This 5th grade girl had a history of emitting the pinpointed behaviors above. Her mother came to school to discuss this problem with the teacher. Similar behavior was being emitted at home. A time sampling technique was used to obtain a baseline for the pinpointed behaviors. On the first day the child was observed for a few brief seconds at 9:30 A.M., 11:30 A.M. and 2:15 P.M. If the child was emitting any of the pinpointed behaviors a minus sign (-) was marked on a sheet of paper. If the child was engaged in some other behavior a check mark (✓) was recorded. After the first day the teacher began to praise heavily whenever the child was engaged in cooperative acts, smiling, studying or emitting any desireable behavior. The teacher technically reinforced behaviors that were incompatible (could not be emitted at the same time as) with the pinpointed behaviors. The teache-r employed a method of successive approximations or "shaping" of desireable behavior by at first praising and attending to even the slightest smile or hint of a cooperative act.

Results and Discussion:

Since only 3 observations were made each day the number of pinpointed behaviors could not exceed three. The chart below simply depicts the sharp decline during observation periods for the days data was collected. There was a marked change in the childs behavior. The teacher reported the child was smiling, talking, following instructions and acting "happy". The mother came to school to find out the teachers "secret" . The prescription was explained to the mother who proceeded to apply it at home with great success. The mother is now keeping charts at home based on consultation with the teacher.



Number of pouts, sulks, and failures to follow instructions during each day during the three observation periods.

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Project: Reducing Group Talk-out with the use of a Group Response Cost Prescription

Mrs. Judith Conrad-1st Grade Teacher

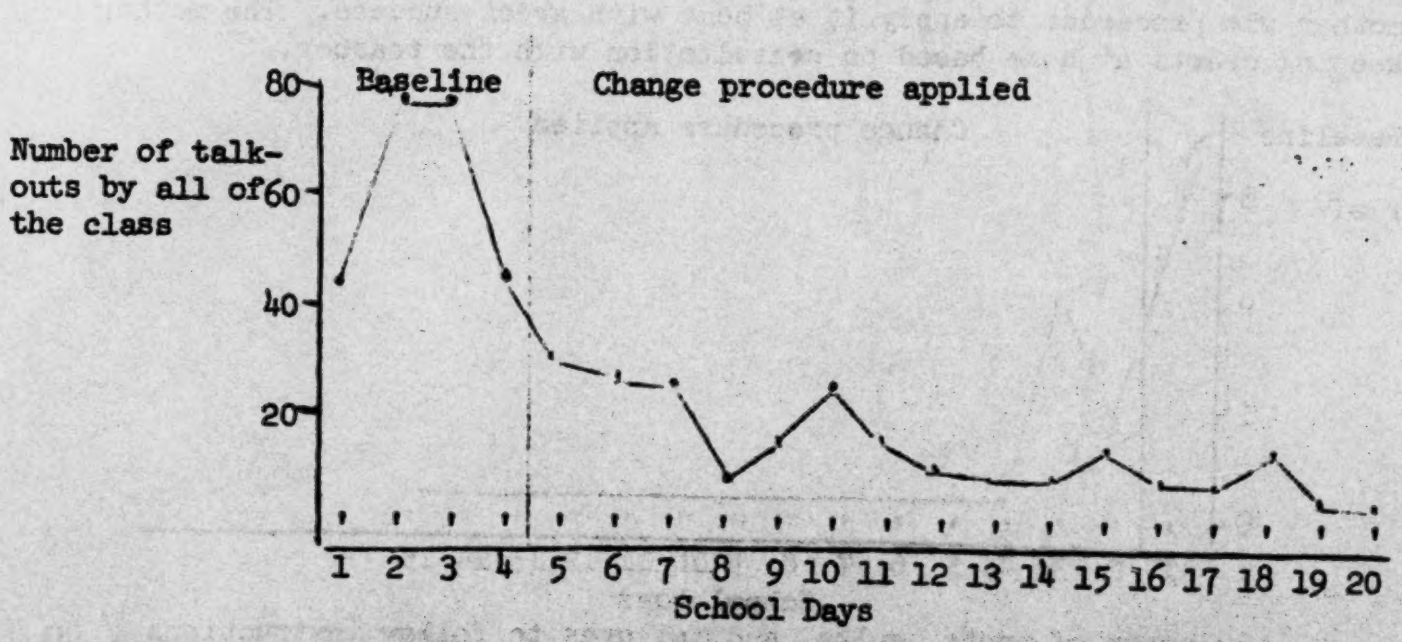
Pinpointed Behavior: Talk-outs of the whole class (any class member) during reading and news time

Procedure:

Talking-out by any child was recorded during the 105 minutes of the reading and news time. Four days of baseline were taken. Then a large chart was made and put on the blackboard. The class was told that it would have 20 minutes "free time" at the end of the day if they wanted to, but that for every five (5) talk-outs they would lose a minute of the free time, and that they should try to make the chart go down. Teacher verbal praise was also recorded.(but not shown on the chart below)

Results and Discussion:

During the baseline the talk-outs varied between around 40 and 80 a period, and during the response cost procedure, they went down to 30 or so immediatley, and then down to around 10. Peer pressure was observed, children telling others to be "quiet," and they also wanted to try to get the chart line to go down.


Baseline
Change procedure applied
Number of talk-outs by all of the class
80
60
40
20
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
School Days

Number of daily talk-outs for a 105 minute news and reading period for all of the class

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Project: Increasing the number of assignments with the use of a praise and counting prescription

Mrs. Ronnie Fassberg - 6th Grade Teacher

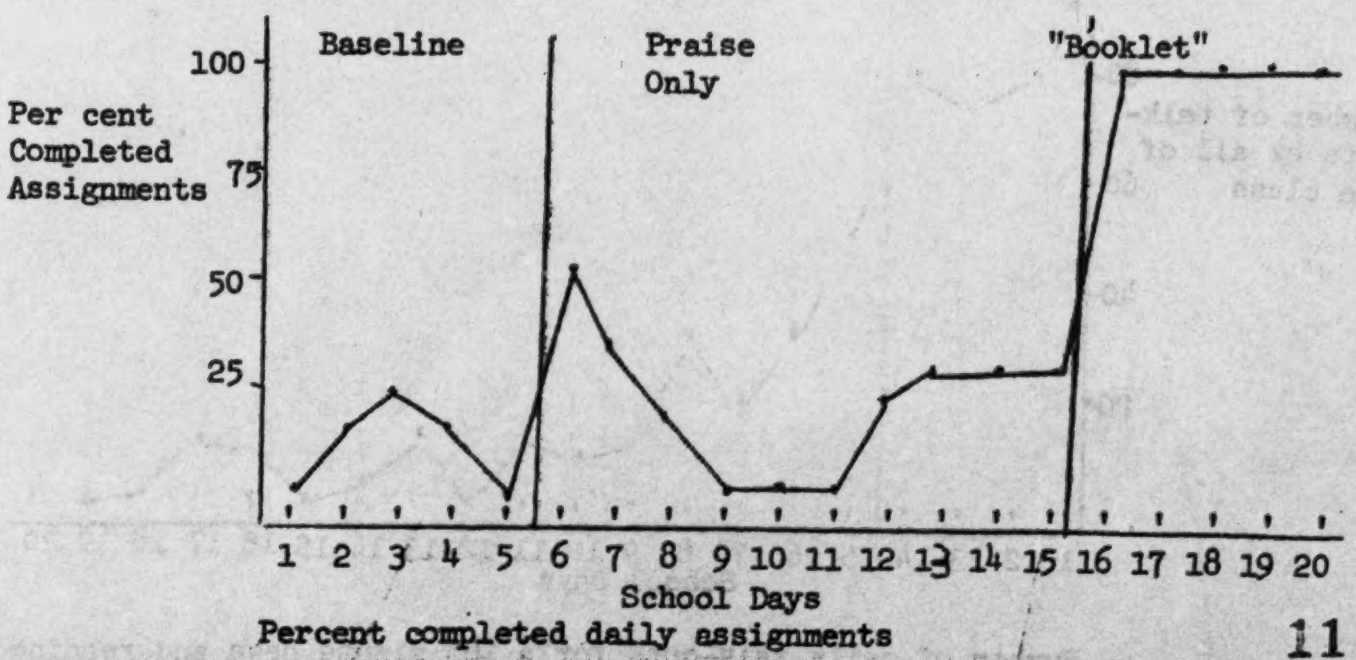
Pinpointed Behavior: Number of daily assignments completed.

Procedure:

The 6th grader concerned in this project had consistently turned in less than 30% of his daily classroom assignments. During the baseline period of 5 days the number of daily assignments completed was counted and computed as a per cent of the total daily assignments given. On the 6th school day a praise procedure was begun. The teacher commended the student for beginning his work and working studiously. Any completed assignments were heavily praised. After several days when this procedure did not appaar to be changing the childs behavior with respect to completed assignments a new procedure was instituted. The child was given a small booklet in which the teacher made a check for each eompleted assignment. This booklet was sent home for the parents to see. In other situations this type of visual representation has been shown to help children in attaining some goal.

Results and Discussion:
The chart below describes the results. While the praise alone did not seem to work very well, the addition of the booklet had a dramatic effect on the number of completed assignments. During the last 5 days of the project during which data was kept, the child completed 100% of his daily assignments.
The teacher reports that upon using the booklet:

> "Immediately he began to complete work so he could check off his own work. His pleasure at seeing the checks encouraged him to complete work. As he is completing work he is automatically striving to do better quality work. He is growing more satisfied daily both in the knowledge that he is doing the work and in the feeling of success at a job well done."



Percent completed daily assignments

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Project: Reducing Group Talk-out with the use of a Group Response Cost Prescription

Mrs. Joyce Johnston-1st Grade Teacher

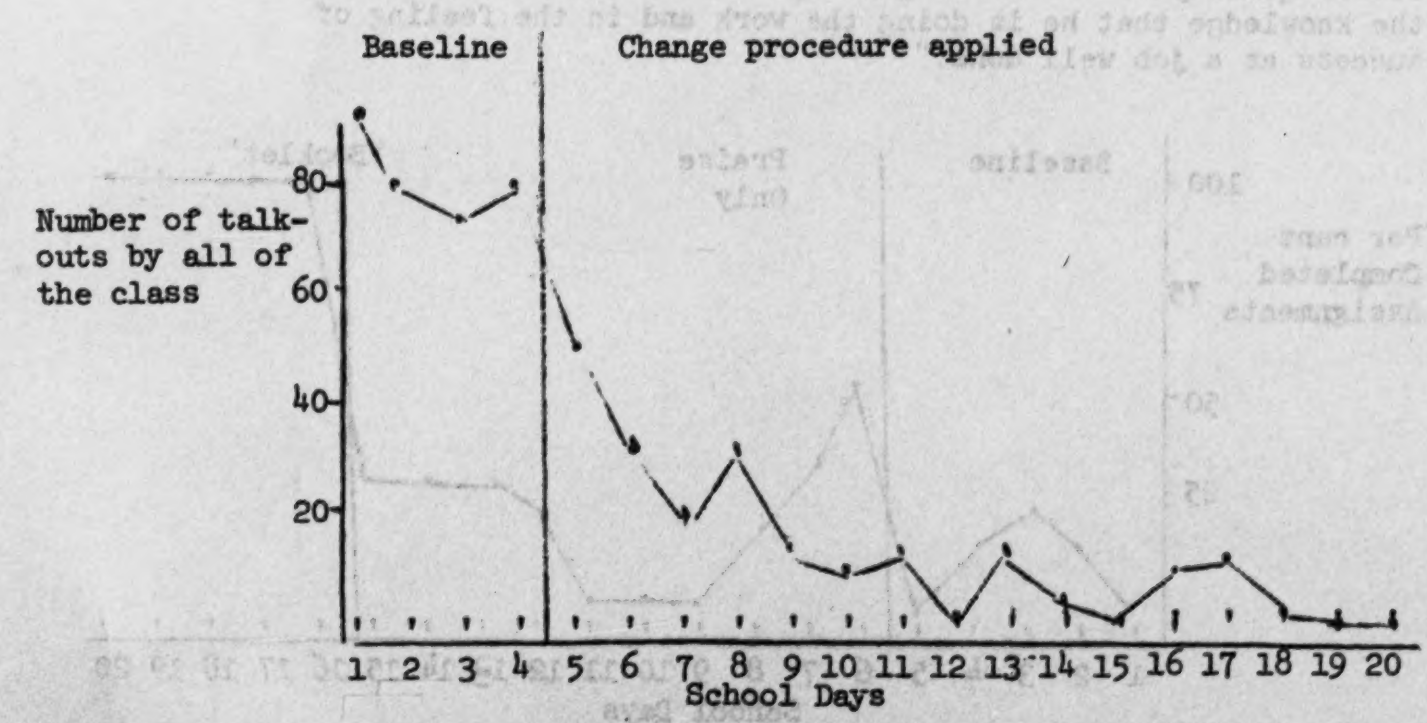
Pinpointed Behavior: Talk-outs of the whole class (any class member) during reading and news time

Procedure:

Talking-out by any child was recorded during the 105 minutes of the reading and news time. Four days of baseline were taken. Then a large chart was made and put on the blackboard. The class was told that it would have 20 minutes "free time" at the end of the day if they wanted to, but that for every five (5) talk-outs they would lose a minute of the free time, and that they should try to make the chart go down. Teacher verbal priase was recorded (but not shown on the chart below)

Results and Discussion:

During the baseline there were 80 or so talk-outs a period, and during the response cost procedure, they want down to 50 or so immediately. In the next days the number of talk-outs very quickly want down to 10 or less. The teacher reported that the children in the class wanted the chart line to go to 0, and to touch the bottom line of the chart. The teacher also reported "peer pressure," children telling other children to be "quiet!" A grocery store counter was used to count the talk-outs, and the children were "very aware" of the click of the counter, and the notes on the board for how many talk-outs were counted.


Baseline
Change procedure applied
Number of talk-outs by all of the class
80
60
40
20
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20
School Days

Number of daily talk-outs for a 105 minute news and reading period for all of the class

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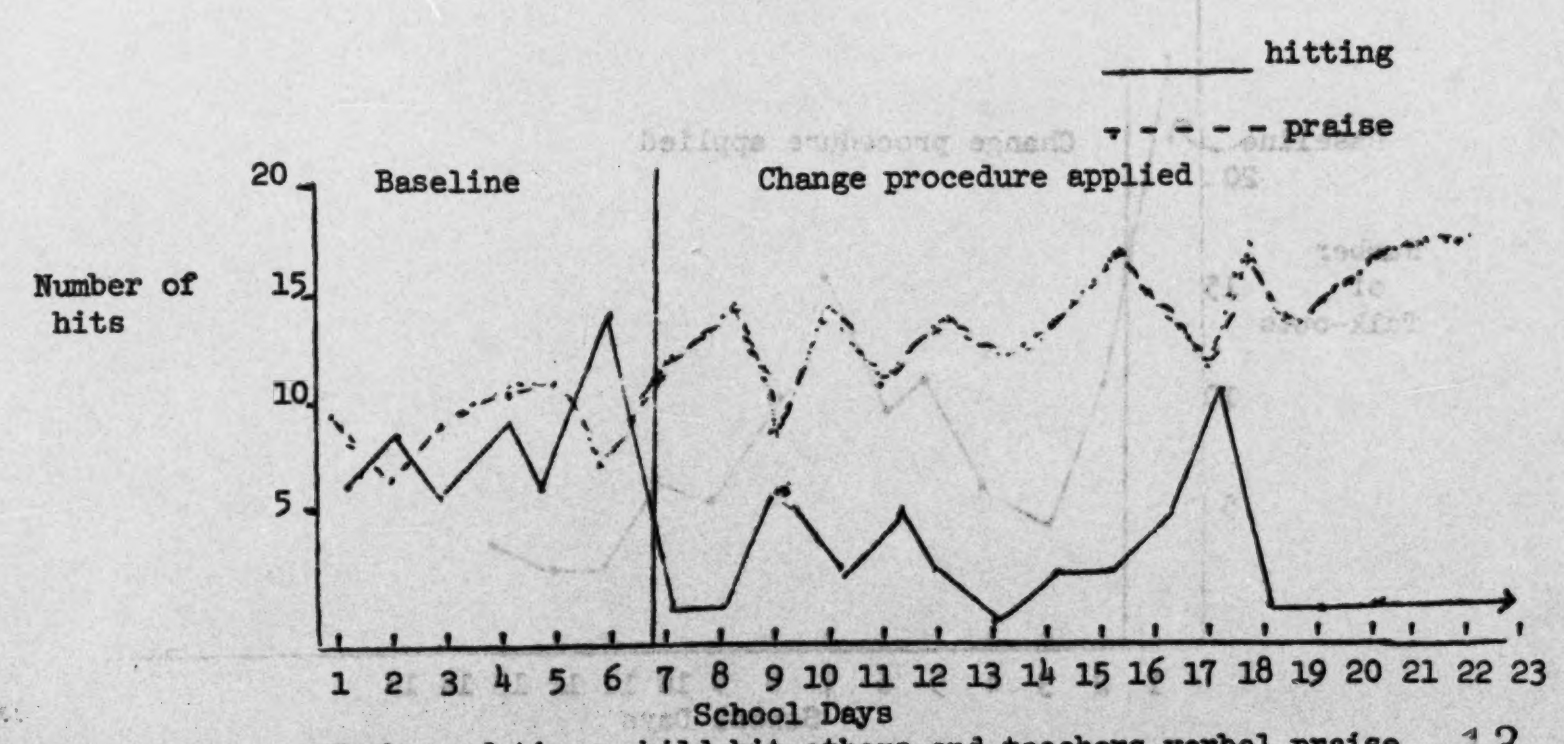
Project: Decreasing hitting behavior with a verbal praise prescription

Miss Lynda Levy - 2nd Grade Teacher

Pinpointed Behavior: Hitting others with hand or object.

Procedure:
During baseline period the total number of times the child hit others was counted. Following this the teacher began praising the child when he was not hitting. The teacher praised the child for his good behavior. The teacher attended to behavior that was cooperative and incompatible with hitting. During the same time the teacher counted her own verbal praise for a 20-minute period each day.

Results and Discussion:
Results are shown on the chart below. During the last 9 days for which data is shown the child hit only 1 time each day.
The teachers verbal praise to any and all children in the classroom was shown to double over the duration of the project.



Number of times child hit others and teachers verbal praise

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Project: Decreasing the amount of inappropriate talk-out behavior with the use of a praise prescription

Mrs. Mary Mahlstedt - Kindergarten teacher

Pinpointed Behavior: Talking-out in class when teacher is talking.

Procedure:

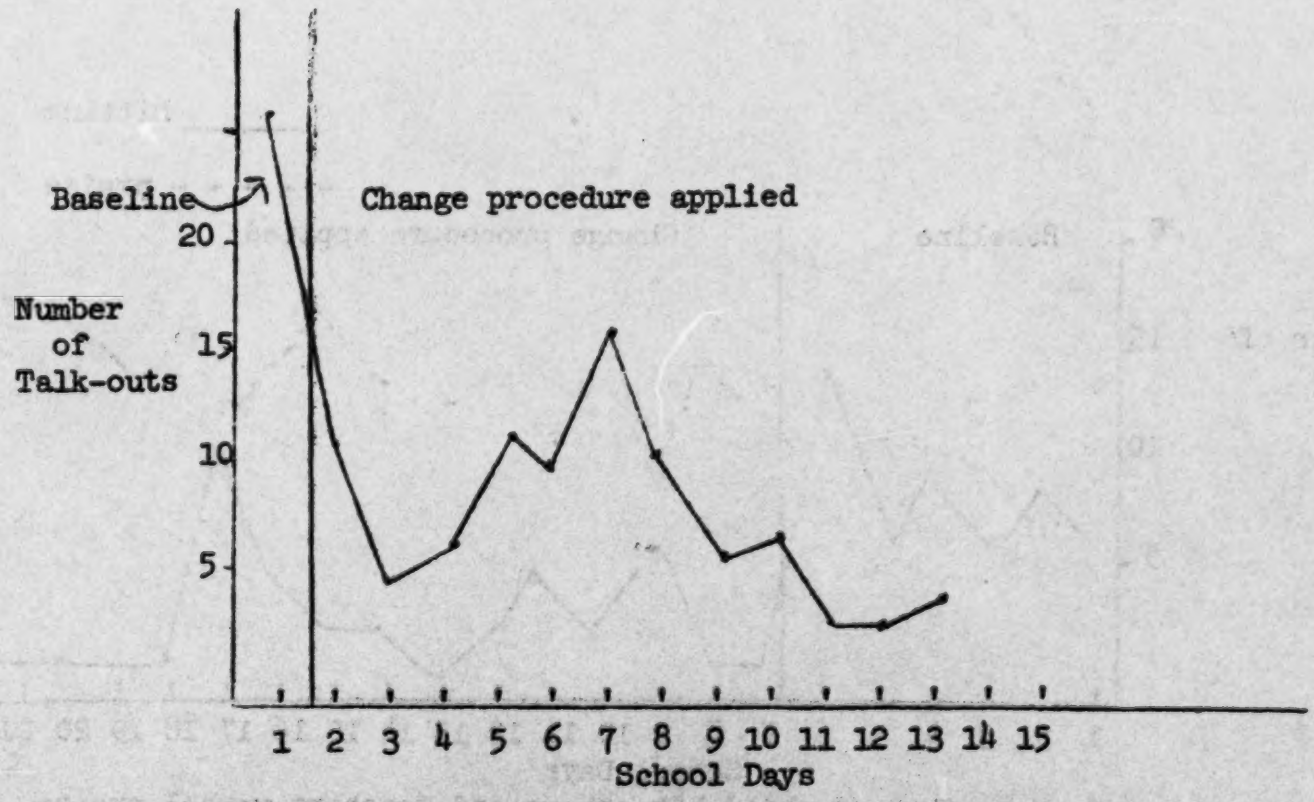
The amount of talk-out behavior was counted for a 30 minute period each day during the tenure of the project. After one day of baseline the simple procedure of the child for her good behavior was begun. If the child talked out she was not criticized but another child that was behaving appropriately was praised.

Results and Discussion:

The chart below depicts the number of talk-outs each day. The teachers own wordsbest describe the results:

"_____ constantly talked out during "together times". If the teacher talked, _____ talked! She constantly took everyone elses turn.

I began praising, 'Look how nicely Peter is waiting for his turn. The charting shows that she has almost stopped this behavior. It is interesting to note that other children have begun to praise her behavior as well as (each) other. Praise is the key in the room which is nice."



Number of talk-outs for a 30 minute period daily.

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Project: Increasing the number of completed assignments with the use of a verbal praise prescription

Mrs. Fran O'Connel-6th Grade Teacher

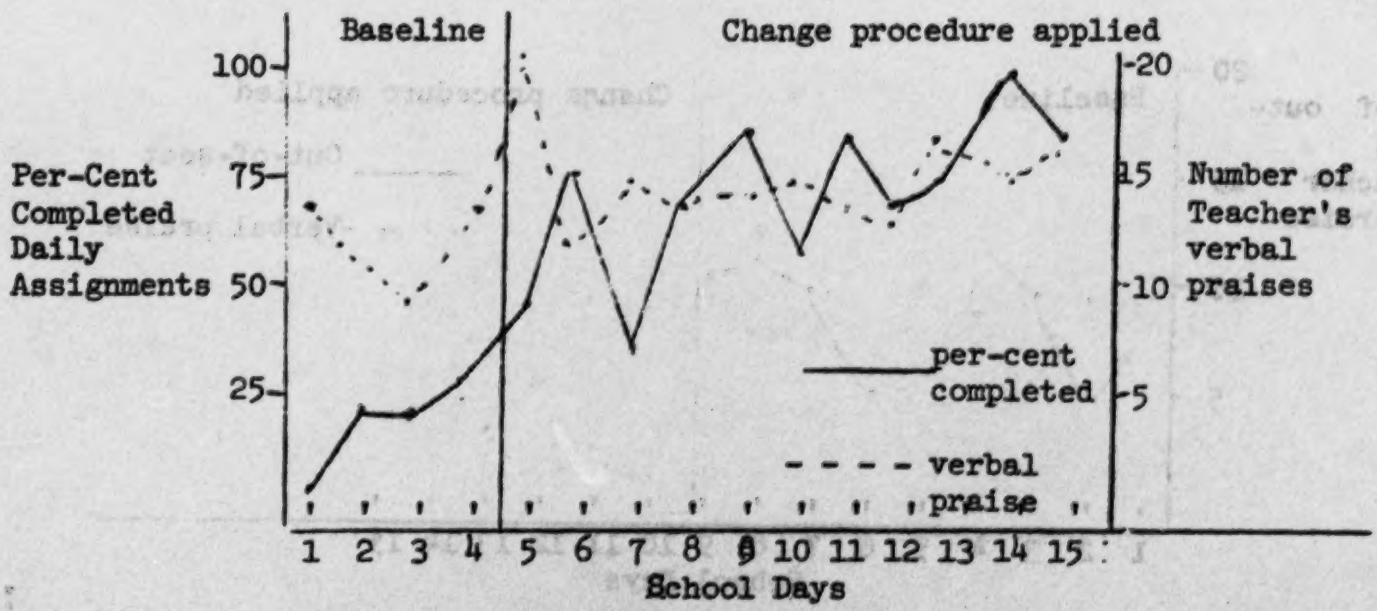
Pinpointed Behavior: Fully completing daily in-class work assignments

Procedure:
During each day various classroom assignments were given to all students. The child concerned in this project generally failed to complete all or most of her assignments. During the first 4 days of the project the total number of assignments the child completed throughout the day was counted and computed as a per cent of the total assignments given by the teacher. This constituted the baseline portion of the project. After the fourthday the teacher began to praise the child for successive approximations to completed assignments and praised heavily when the child completed one entire assignment. This praise was given in class immediately on completion of some assignment. The praise was given even if other assignments were not completed.

During the same period of time the teacher counted her own verbal praise to any child in the class for a 20-minute period each day. An attempt was made to emit verbal praise at the rate of at least once every two minutes.

Results and Discussion:

Baseline data and number of talkouts after the change prescription are shown in the chart below. The left-hand ordinate refers to the per cent of completed assignments and the right hand ordinate to the number of verbal praises emitted by the teacher. The per-cent of completed assignments increased from an average of about 20% during baseline to over 80% for the last three days of the project period illustrated below. The teachers verbal praise to the entire class for a 20-minute period is also shown to increase.



Per-cent completed daily assignments and teacher verbal praise

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Project: Reducing Out-Of-Seat Behavior with the use of a "Countoon" Prescription (Response Cost)

Mrs. Tess Reveman-4th Grade Teacher

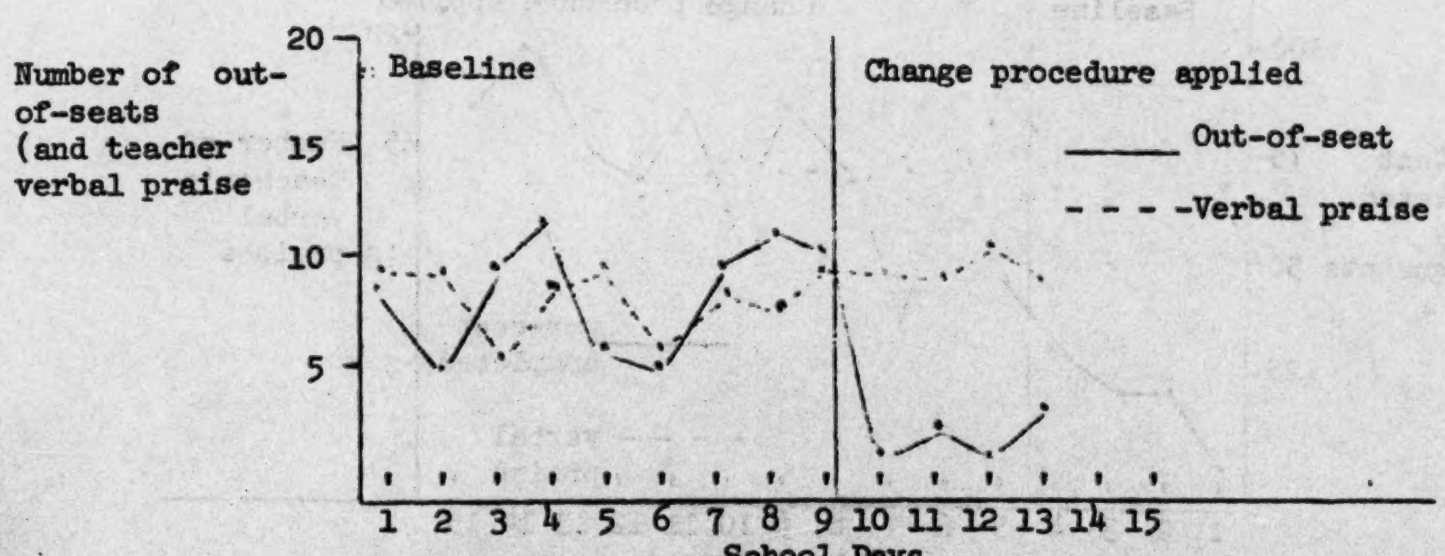
Pinpointed Behavior: Out-of-seat during class

Procedure:

Out-of-seat behavior was observed for a 9 day baseline period. Teacher verbal praise to any class member was counted by the teacher for a 20 minute period each day also. The child was then given a countoon showing sitting-at-desk and out-of-seat behavior. The 25 was circled on the "My Count" numbers, and the child was told that if he had fewer than 25 talk-outs for the whole day, then he could have 10 minutes free time at the library at the end of the day. This was done for days 10 and 11. For days 12 and 13 the number of out-of-seat behaviors he had as a limit was dropped to 8, and the 8 was circled. The out-of-seat behaviors were counted by the teacher during this time for 40 minutes, as it had been done during the baseline.

Results and Discussion:

The teacher's verbal praise rate was quite high initially, and rose during the project. The out-of-seat behaviors, which were around 9 or so during the baseline period droped to 2 or 3 immediately when the response cost procedure with the countoon was introduced. When the limit was dropped to 8 out-of-seats, it did not make any difference. These results are shown in the chart below.



Number of daily out-of-seats for a 40 minute period each day, and verbal praises for a 20 minute period

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Project: Increasing the amount of spontaneous verbal behavior with the use of praise, counting, and prompting prescriptions.

Mrs. Yolanda Rupel - 5th Grade Teacher

Pinpointed Behavior: Spontaneous talking and normal verbal behavior with teacher and other students.

Procedure:

The teacher reports:

"Her school records of the past 2 years state that she has been an extreme introvert. No spontaneous verbalization in school.

I talked to _____about how important it is to communicate with other people at school. I've asked her to count the number of times she spontaneously talks out at school. I've been sending her on errands that require her to talk to other students and teachers."

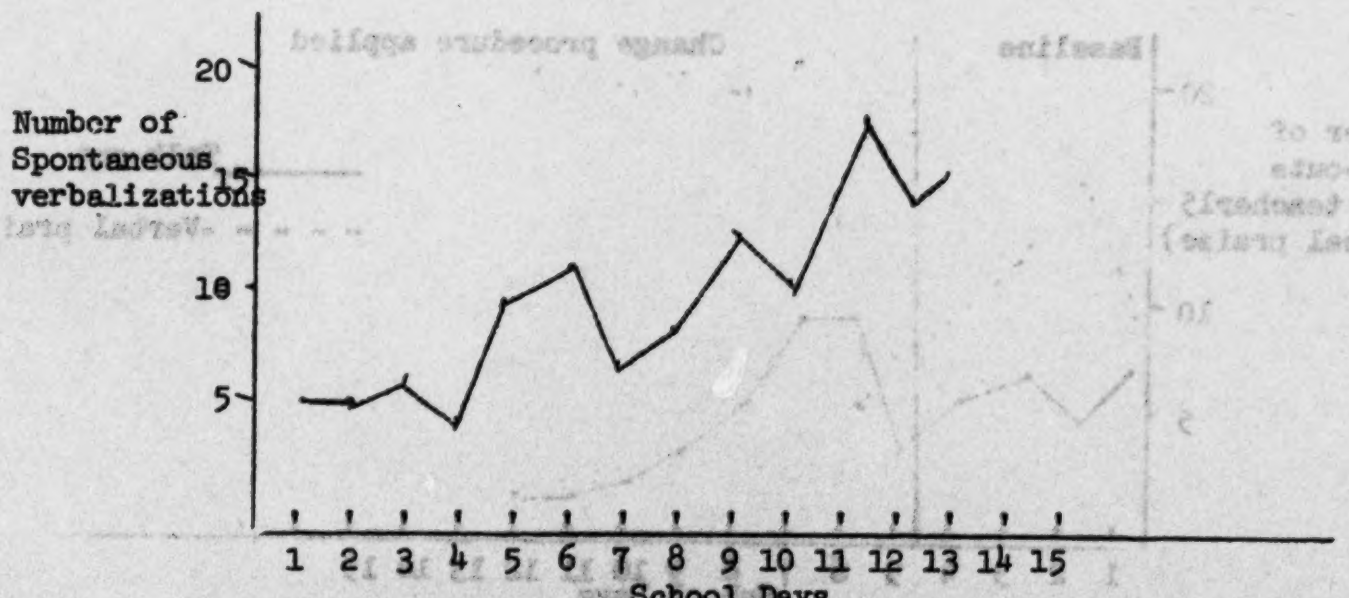
The sending of the child on assignments that would require her to talk to others is technically a prompting procedure.

Results and Discussion:

The number of spontaneous verbaliz-tions is charted below. The teacher reports:

"All these devices have raised the number of times she talks spontaneously each day.

For the first time this week I saw her engage in social interaction with other children. She was fooling around in response to other students. (This was good!)"



Number of daily spontaneous vocalizations

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Project: Reducing Talk-Out Behavior with the use of a "Praise and Ignore" Prescription

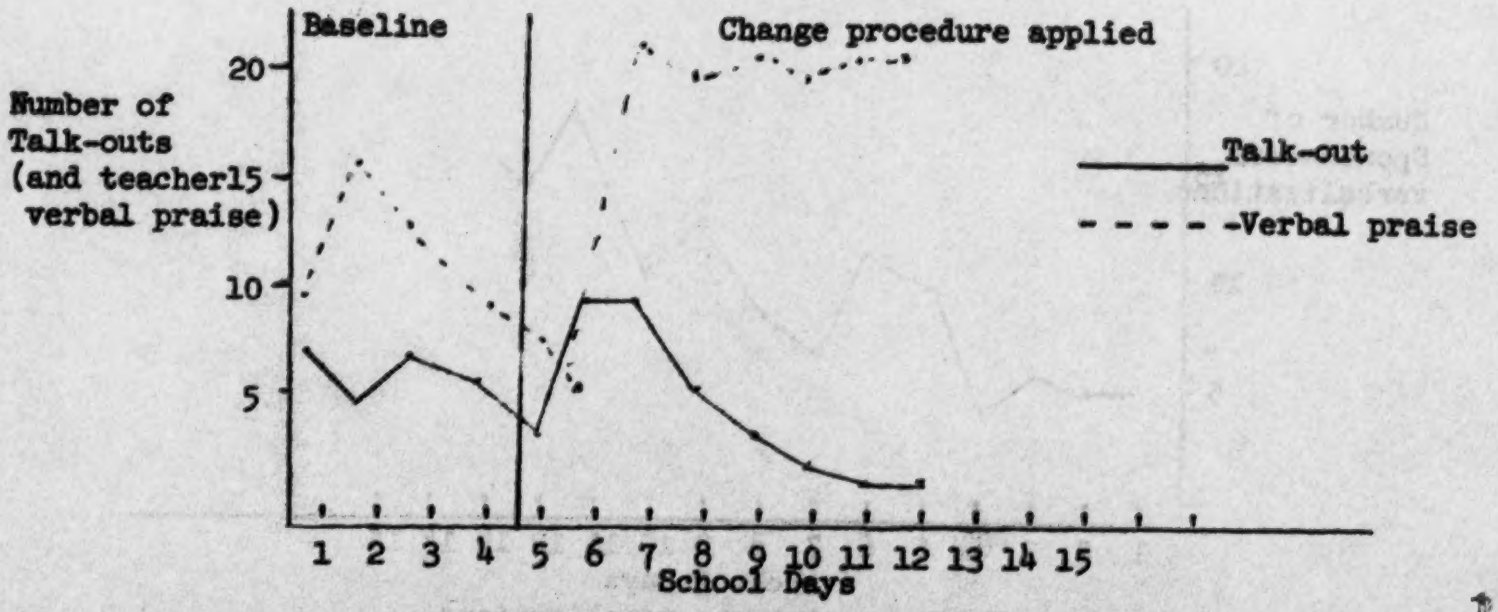
Miss Irene Shumofsky - 3rd Grade Teacher

Pinpointed Behavior: Talking-out without permission during class

Procedure:
Talk-out behavior was counted for a 20 minute period each day for four days to establish a baseline. After the fourth day the student was no longer criticised for talking out. His inappropriate behavior was ignored. On the other hand he was praised when he was found sitting quietly and engaging in appropriate academic behavior. The child was "caught being good". The counting of talk-outs continued for the next 8 days during which the "praise and ignore" prescription was applied.
During the same period of time the teacher counted her own verbal praise to any child in the class for a 20-minute period each day. An attempt was made to emit verbal praise at the rate of at least once every two minutes (.5 per minute). This praise was directed at any and all children in the class not just the child being discussed here.

Results and Discussion

Baseline data and number of talkouts after the change procedure are shown in the chart below. There was a dramatic decrease in the number of talk-outs during the 20 minute period of counting. Talk-out during the rest of the day decreased similarly. The teachers verbal praise increased considerably. The teacher reported, "It has worked. All his behavior improved. Have used other techniques for (his)incomplete work."



Number of daily talk-outs and teacher verbal praises during a 20-minute period.

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Project: Increasing Completed Work during reading period with the use of a Verbal Praise and Ignore Prescription

Mrs. Patricia Zeolla-3rd Grade Teacher

Pinpointed Behavior: 100% completion of assigned work

Procedure:

Ignoring the child when he was not doing work, and praising him when he was doing work was the tactic used with this boy. Although a chart is available, it is not shown below. Rather, an extended comment by the teacher is reproduced.

Results and Discussion:

"He is a very bright child who came to me hating school and hating work. For quite some time he did nothing. I then began giving him a great deal of verbal praise. Instead of punishing him for not doing work, I rewarded him for the things he did do. He is showing a great deal of improvement. Not only has his work gotten better but his own attitude about school and work has improved.

Our relationship has gotten much much better. Iv'e had conferences with his mother who says he is better now than he has ever been as far as his attitude towards school. She sees a first major breakthrough. She is also in the progress of setting up the same techniques. There had formerly been a great deal of negative reinforcement at home. I have been giving him a great deal of attention but I have never once felt that the rest of the class suffered.

He still has a long way to go, but I truly feel that I've put him on the right track."